

St Swithun's Church Family

Trinity 1

Sunday 14th June 2020

Ordinary Time



Hope

*Please use this booklet to **worship with us** – ideally at 10am on Sunday so that we know we are joining our prayers together but any time is good. Use a candle and a cross if you can find them to give your worship a focus. The children might like to use the Sunday school resources provided by Izzy.*

This is a Service of The Word. It doesn't matter if you are one person or a family together – use the booklet and go through the words – stop and reflect as you need to. We are going to record this service again and add it to the website www.saintswithuns.org.uk There are various prayer resources and other things to look at on the website – if you have any feedback or anything to share please let me know.

Giving - if you usually give your collection on a Sunday morning in cash, and you are able to, please put this aside each week to bring to church when you are next able to. Even better would be to set up your giving online ('Saint Swithun's PCC' ; 60-05-11 ; 16126718 ; NatWest Bank) if you haven't already done this.

You might like to enhance your worship by singing or listening to a hymn or a song at various points – I have a few suggestions below – you tube is a great resource...

**This little light of mine
We have a Gospel to proclaim
I the Lord of sea and sky
All are welcome**

<https://youtu.be/QCN893hzueQ>
<https://youtu.be/B2FX0-kS7wA>
<https://youtu.be/mgLwH5RdtPk>
<https://youtu.be/js8RtT0mJpc>

Introduction

Today is the first Sunday after Trinity – and we are back into Ordinary Time. What is ‘ordinary’ seems rather hard to make sense of anymore – in our lockdown lives we seem to be slowly getting back to our ordinary ways – although there are many things which are still very different – like shopping and Church - we talk about the ‘new normal’ and wanting to ‘get back to normal’ but I am no longer sure I know what normal is anyway.

In the Church we are in a sense returning to normal as we are back into our green season. It is perhaps my favourite time in the Church’s year – because it is the time we can let go and explore and develop. Green is the colour of growing things and today in our worship we are focussing on growing our hope with faith and love. We invite you to wear something green – as we grow together in hope, faith and love.

The Gathering

The Greeting

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you

Opening Prayer

We come before you, God of ancient times,

acknowledging your presence with us,

We come before you, God of the present,

Believing in your presence with us,

We come before you, God of the future,

Hoping for your presence with us.

Saying sorry - prayers of penitence

As we prepare to say sorry to God let us take a moment of quiet to recall our behaviour, our relationships, our attitude over the past few days – what do we need to repent of? What have we ignored or stayed silent on that we should say sorry for?

We are sorry:

For those times we have abused our power to oppress others,
Lord, have mercy

Lord, have mercy

For those times we have talked and not listened,
Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

For those times we have ignored injustice,
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

We know that God forgives us when we say sorry

We are forgiven

May the God of love and power
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by the Spirit,
and raise us to new life in the risen Christ.

Amen.

Action

We are called to live in the light of God – saying sorry isn't enough. What actions or changes do we need to make to our daily life to live in God's love? List some ideas and stick them to the fridge as a reminder of how we need to actively live in God's love.



Glory to God

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to all people on earth.

Find a way to rejoice knowing that God loves us and makes us whole. Maybe you could have a quick dance to your favourite tune, tell a funny joke, shut your eyes and feel God's loving embrace warming you, picture a place where you feel one with God.

Today we will reflect on feeling at home in God's presence – where do you feel most at one with God?



Picture the place – closing your eyes – imagine yourself there - take time to be in the moment with God.

Remember what it looks like, what it sounds like, what it feels like, maybe what it tastes like...

When you are ready – come back to our worship knowing that God's loving presence embraces us.

The Collect

God of truth,
help us to keep your law of love
and to walk in ways of wisdom,
that we may find true life
in Jesus Christ your Son.

Amen

The Liturgy of the Word

Listen for the Word which God has spoken

**Speak, God of life,
to our speaking,
Speak, God of justice,
to our listening,
Speak, God of love,
to our souls' deep understanding.**

Bible Reading

Romans 5.1-8

Therefore, since we are justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
through whom we have obtained access to this grace
in which we stand; and we boast in our hope
of sharing the glory of God.

And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing
that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces
character, and character produces hope,
and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love
has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit
that has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the
ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—
though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare
to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were
sinners Christ died for us.

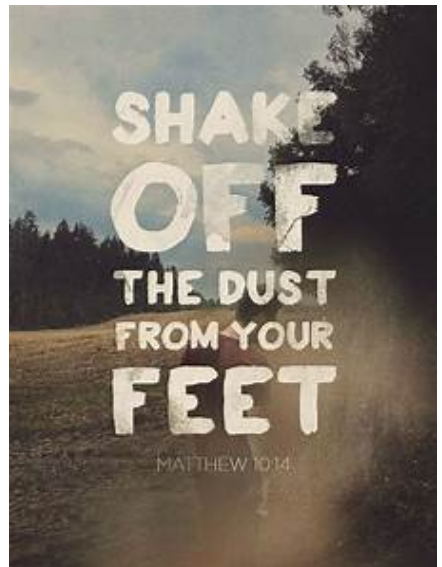
The Gospel Reading *Matthew 10.1-14*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for labourers deserve their food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.



Sermon *Mother Juliet*

To quote Enita from our Zoom Coffee – ‘I’ve never known anything like it’. These last few weeks and the most recent weeks have been unlike anything we have ever known or seen – the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement really blowing through us and there is hope that things will change.

In the reading from Paul’s letter to the Romans we hear that, ‘suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us’.

I wonder what that feels like?

I wonder what that means to you?

Hearing an emphasis on suffering seems hard to hear – we don’t want to revel in anything that hurts – surely?

I picked out the emphasis on hope which doesn’t disappoint as that is what I, and I think the world, and I expect all of you, need to hear – right now?



Hope - is a hugely powerful thing that we have as Christians. For we know that however grim or dark or difficult things are - we have hope and it doesn't disappoint because God's love is poured into us - I love that image of God's love being poured into us - abundant and full of grace.

But living in hope doesn't mean we can airbrush the reality away.

Those of you who shared your stories of racism with me spoke loudly and clearly that your experiences are real and hurtful and painful - prejudice is past, present and will be the future – we must do all we can to bring justice and peace to our world.

The Bishop of Dover, Rose Hudson-Wilkin, spoke on BBC News this week saying that the world doesn't pay attention unless we stand up and say that we need a new social contract that "delivers the transformation that is needed".

Bishop Rose spoke of the racism pandemic – she acknowledged the reality of prejudice as she spoke powerfully to the nation last week.



The other pandemic – the coronavirus pandemic - has also been tragic - lives have been changed. There has been untimely death, isolation, as well as the inability to function socially or economically as we want to - the pain is real – even if there have been good things in this situation – there is real pain to acknowledge as well.

All of us connect to pain in various ways as everyone will have different experiences of challenges and tough times in our own lives. Suffering is real and painful. Living in hope is not jumping

forward and pretending everything is OK. It is recognising the suffering and offering it to God. - Our God who suffers with us on the cross.

We read in Romans that suffering gives us endurance. It doesn't say "pretend it is all ok and overlook it because some people can't cope with that reality".

Facing pain feels a little counter cultural.

We don't like our own pain and we definitely don't like seeing the pain of others – dare I say especially children. However not allowing children or ourselves to feel pain can be very bad for us as we don't build necessary endurance and resilience for life.

Being strong is not avoiding pain. Strength is in feeling the pain and knowing we can get through it and cope in the future. Avoiding the reality and being distracted is not hope. It is fear.

We have heard untold suffering – we have heard the hatred openly and covertly inflicted on many in our church family as we listen to the experiences of racism so many have suffered.

As Christians we know that our suffering is shared on the cross. We are loved - God loves us - pours love into us - however hard life gets - and on the cross - God holds us and experiences it with us and God's love is poured into us through the love of others who are participating in God's love - for we together are a community of love.

Whenever there is suffering we hurt together - but there is also the outpouring of love from our church family, from family, friends, neighbours, communities, national and international messages and acts of love. In these crazy times – let us focus not just on the struggles but also on love. Not to airbrush anything that is difficult but to remember that it is love - God's love and our love which produces hope.

The idea of character and hope makes me think about the beautiful painting called 'Hope' by the artist George Frederic Watts, who was said to have painted it in a moment of anguish after the death of his adopted daughter, Blanche.

When we think of hope we might expect something glowing and beautiful - perhaps a woman sitting on top of the world singing and playing a harp, laughing in the bright sunlight. But instead this is a picture of a blind woman, her clothes torn and tattered in rags, her body scarred and bruised from some trauma. Her harp is almost completely destroyed. All that remains is one single string, with which she is plucking out a sound.



This message from Romans is for the earliest Christians, who were people of hope through deeply dark times - not hopeful in some vague way that all will work out ok in the end, but in the ultimate transformation that God will bring to the whole creation, a future when all will be put right with humanity and with the world.

Shortly after Mandela's death, in the speeches that were given after he died - this was said about the impact of Mandela in relation to this painting:

'The painting, entitled "Hope", is about the boldness of a girl to believe that, even when blinded and even with a broken harp and only one string, she could still play music. Her and Mandela's belief was that even in the most difficult and bleak of times, even when things seem hopeless, there could still be hope. We are mourning because as long as Mandela was alive we knew that even in the worst of disasters, amidst the most terrible of tragedies and conflict, there was someone there, standing between us and the elements, who represented goodness and nobility. And we are celebrating today because the lessons that we have learned from him will live on. He teaches us that indeed no injustice can last for ever. He teaches us that whenever good people of courage come together, there is infinite hope".

The funeral of George Floyd was last week and people lined up in the church in Houston to share impassioned pleas for racial justice. The people who gathered in that space and around the world were mourning the loss of a man who died because of the colour of his skin. You do not need me to tell you that this is real and urgent and needs to continue to be spoken.

We know that facing the reality of how things are - is to make change – to bring justice – to draw lines about what is and what is not acceptable.

In our gospel reading we hear one of my favourite expressions – that ‘if anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town’.

We can’t make other people change their attitudes, but we must try to share God’s all-inclusive love. When we feel the time is right – we can leave it with God and shake the dust from our feet.

Following our Romans reading facing our reality can give us resilience and endurance which gives us character - and from that character like the girl in this painting we can have hope. If we put the two readings together – we see that we do not revel in the suffering but we approach each situation in God’s love – which means that we can hope but we sometimes need to know when self-care is uppermost and the time to move on is needed.

Whatever our lives, none of us can avoid suffering at some point in our existence. And despite the challenges we all face and some very particularly, we can be assured that Christian hope does not disappoint – because it has God’s love all over it.

As a church we are to gather together in faith, hope and love
When we feel and hear all of this hurt and pain, as a church, we need to place all of this into God’s story of love.

The following poem (apologies I have read this before) sums up perfectly the hope we have in God’s love. I hope that one day soon we can gather the shreds of our stories – however broken - and weave them into something to remind us of the beauty of God’s re-creation....



To Weavers Everywhere, M. Rienstra

*God sits weeping,
the beautiful creation tapestry
She wove with such joy,
is mutilated, torn into shreds,
Reduced to rags,
its beauty fragmented by force.
God sits weeping.*

*But look!
She is gathering up the shreds
to weave something new.
She gathers the rags of hard work
Attempts at advocacy, initiatives for peace,
Protests against injustice,
all the seemingly little and weak
Words and deeds offered
Sacrificially
In hope, in faith, in love.
And look!*

*She is weaving them all
with golden threads of Jubilation
Into a new tapestry,
a creation richer, more beautiful
Than the old one was!
God sits weaving
Patiently, persistently, with a smile that
Radiates like a rainbow on her tear-streaked face.
And She invites us
Not only to keep offering her the
shreds and rags of our suffering
And our work,
But even more - to take our place beside Her
At the Jubilee Loom,
And weave with her
The tapestry of the New Creation.*

Profession of Faith

We remember that we are joined together as a family despite not being able to meet in person at the moment – our faith holds us all – whoever we are, however we come to God:

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.
We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.
We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**



*Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps
hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls
to arrive at its destination full of hope.*

- Maya Angelou

Prayers *Richard Evans*

In our prayers today, please take time to bring to God your own thoughts, hopes and needs

Loving God, our hope; please hear us as we pray today for our world. For all who hold power to make peace, rule justly, heal division, protect the environment, fight disease. Over-rule in the hearts of politicians and leaders everywhere. And please bring an end to the Coronavirus.

Loving God, our hope:

Hear our prayer

We pray for all people who suffer because of racism in our world. Who fear violence, suspicion and resentment because of the colour of their skin. Please bring hope and strengthen faith. Please empower all who work for change and let the voices of all who cry "Black Lives Matter" be heard.

Loving God, our hope

Hear our prayer

Loving God, our hope; please hear us as we pray today for our country and community.

For compassion, tolerance and love between all people. For respectful and dedicated leaders. For safety on our streets.

For an end to prejudice.

Loving God, our hope

Hear our prayer

We pray for all who are suffering stress in our area as a result of the Coronavirus. For those fearful in their homes. For the lonely and those who would rather be alone than abused. For the vulnerable. Those without income. For any struggling to cope with the restrictions and the fear. We pray for healing for our land and in our neighbourhood.

Loving God, our hope

Hear our prayer

Loving God, our hope; please hear us as we pray today for our church. Thank you for the faith which binds us together and for the strength that you have provided to keep us connected during the lock-down. Please help us as we encourage one another to also spread your love, bringing your Kingdom alive in Hither Green.

Loving God, our hope

Hear our prayer

Please bless our church leaders. Thank you for Juliet. We ask for wisdom for her and the PCC as restrictions are relaxed and planning has to take place for safe and practical ways to open the church. Bless and inspire her and the ministry team. Help us all to minister to one another. Holding our sisters and brothers in prayer, both in our area and in your church everywhere.

Loving God, our hope

Hear our prayer

Loving God, our hope; please hear us as we pray for all we know who are in particular need and on our hearts today. For Taneisha, Talabi, Elisabeth and family, Olivia and family, Louise, Joshua, David, Ivy, John, Lena, Shonette, Susan, Margaret, Sydney, Edith, Vanda, Lorna, Ena and Stephen. We pray for our own needs and any others that we bring to you now.

Loving God, our hope

Hear our prayer

Loving God, our hope both now and for all time, we remember our sisters and brothers who have died recently.

George, John, Griham, Roy, William, Peter.

Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord

And let light perpetual shine upon them

Merciful Father

Accept these prayers

for the sake of your Son,

our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

The Prayer Jesus taught us

Rejoicing in God's new creation, we pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

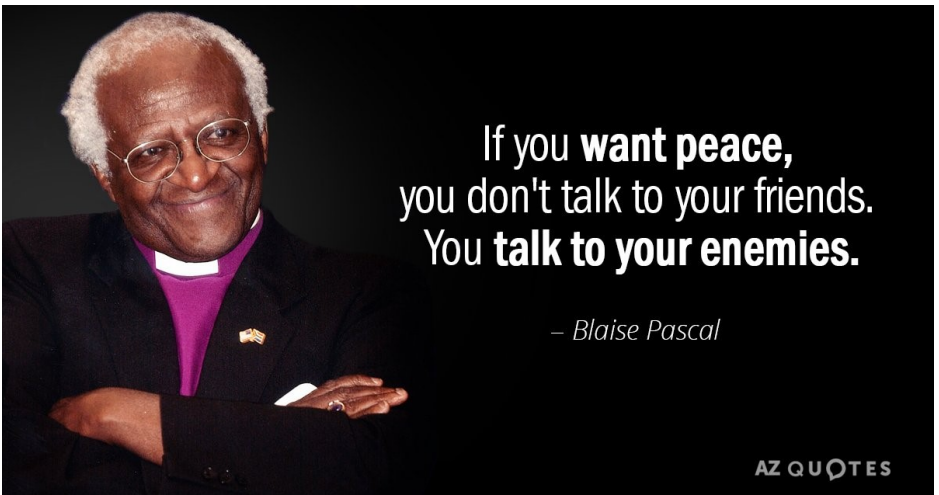
The Peace

God is love and those who live in love live in God
and God lives in them.

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Who could you share God's peace with?



Dismissal and Blessing

The Blessing

May God bless us;
may God keep us in the Spirit's care
and lead our lives with love.

May Christ's warm welcome shine from our hearts and Christ's
own peace prevail through this and everyday. May the God of
love, Creator, Friend and Spirit

Be among us and remain with us always

Amen.

The Dismissal

Celebrating, living, journeying.

We are people on the way.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ.

Amen.



Notices:

- The Church will be open for private prayers soon – the PCC will be discussing this at their upcoming Zoom meeting about how to do this safely in St Swithun's.
- Daily Hope has music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England - 0800 804 8044
- In the absence of foodbank collections Olivia invites us to donate online <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-involved/ways-to-give/make-a-one-off-donation/>
- If you know of anyone in any need – please let Mother Juliet know as we are working with others who can help.

Birthdays:

Happy Birthday to everyone whose birthday it has been recently or is this week – Mary-Jane and Iona



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Number 175020